

Champion of literacy finds joy in helping others learn to read the Bible

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Maurine Frost knew from the time she was a girl God would use her in missionary service. It took her decades to realize her work helping others learn to read the Bible fulfilled that missionary calling in her life.

Those years of service prompted Literacy Texas, a statewide literacy coalition, to present her with this year's Champion of Literacy Award.



Maurine Frost knew from the time she was a girl God would use her in missionary service. It took her decades to realize her work helping others learn to read the Bible fulfilled that

missionary calling in her life. (Photo courtesy of Literacy Connexus)After a career as an educator, she was assigned in 1989 to the Baptist Literacy Missions Center at Baylor University as a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

Early call to missions

Long before that, at age 13 at a Baptist youth camp, she had sensed God's calling to missions.

"Though I had been baptized, I was kind of holding back," she recalled. "You know, we want Jesus to save us, but we are not willing to commit. My reservation was that I had seen picture of Lottie Moon with her little topknot on top of her head and her little glasses on the end of her nose, and I said, 'God, I'll do whatever you want me to do, but I don't want to be a missionary with a little topknot and glasses on my nose.'"

The sermons Fred Swank, longtime pastor of Sagamore Hill Baptist Church in Fort Worth, preached at camp that week focused on giving one's entire life to Christ and not holding anything back.

"On the last night of camp, that's what I did, and I committed my life to one of Christian service," Frost said.

Life got in the way though—she married her first year in college and went on to have five children.

After 20 years as an English teacher, she began to contemplate what was next.

Trusting in God to provide

She still desired to become a career missionary, but a divorce earlier in life removed that prospect as a possibility.

"I was, however, eligible to become a Mission Service Corps volunteer, as

long as I could provide my own financial support,” Frost explained.

When she put a pencil to the figures, the numbers did not work.

“I just said, ‘God, this is where the trust comes in. I don’t have enough to pay everything,’” Frost recalled. God always supplied the substitute school teaching work outside of her missions commitment for her to pay the bills.

Serving at the literacy missions center

When she was assigned to the literacy mission center, she said, “I really didn’t know entirely what it was, but I knew it had to do with reading, and that was the important thing.”

During her last two years as a professional educator, she taught English-as-a-Second-Language. She began as a teacher for the adult literacy workshop and then also began teaching an ESL workshop. In 1991, she was named director of the literacy center.

The literacy missions center served Texas Baptist churches by helping them start literacy programs or acquire the books and training resources to keep those ministries functioning well.

She also coordinated the literacy missions consultants around the state as they sought to continue the growth of literacy missions.

At the end of each of her two-year terms as a missions volunteer, began to pray about God’s will in her continuing.

“Every time, someone would call with news of someone who come to know the Lord through literacy missions, and I would say, ‘OK, Lord,’ and I would continue,” Frost recalled with a smile.

Fulfillment of her calling

She didn't immediately associate her work at literacy missions center with the calling she felt as a girl, because she had always pictured herself as working in medical missions as a nurse.

"God just led me that way, and I wasn't even aware," Frost said. "It was step by step by step, and I didn't know where I was going. But he led me this way, this way, this way, and I wound up exactly where he wanted me. Finally I realized, 'This is what I've been looking for all these years.'"

She retired in 2000, and the literacy missions center on the Baylor campus has closed, but she stays involved in the English-as-a-Second-Language ministry of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco.

Frost was a joy to work with, said Lester Meriwether, executive director of Literacy Connexus and her initial supervisor at the literacy missions center.

"Her dedication to the mission was inspirational and her tenacity in helping churches in the literacy efforts was always complete and thorough," he said. "And she was always cheerful and a friend to everyone she worked with."

Her motivation for involvement in literacy missions is simple: "That all may read God's word.

"They may have been wanting to learn to read to help their kids with their homework, but when we helped them learn to read, we were showing God's love," she said. "When you show people how much you care, they want to know why. Every year, we had hundreds of conversions through literacy missions.

"It was like finding that pearl of great price when I found literacy missions."